

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MARTIN 00169 262024Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 USIA-06 AID-05 L-03 /027 W
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R 201300Z MAY 77
FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2594
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MARTINIQUE 0169

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, PINT, FW
SUBJECT: CULTURAL INITIATIVES

REN: STATE 096982, POR AU PRINCE 1632

1. ALTHOUGH MARTINIQUE WAS NOT AN ACTION ADDRESSEE ON THE STATE CABLE WHICH ASKED ARA POSTS' OPINIONS ABOUT IMPROVING CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH ARA COUNTRIES, I HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FRENCH DEPARTMENTS OF MARTINIQUE, GUADELOUPE AND FRENCH GUIANA IN ANY PROGRAM OF EXPANDED CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CARIBBEAN. WITH HAITI, THEY SHARE A COMMON AFRICAN-FRENCH ORIGIN, AND INASMUCH AS THEY SHARE CERTAIN CULTURAL SIMILARITIES WITH THAT COUNTRY, WE ASSUME THEY COULD BE TIED INTO ANY EXPANDED PROGRAMS ORGANIZED FOR HAITI AT MARGINAL ADDITIONAL COSTS.

2. WE HAVE REPORTED FROM TIME TO TIME THAT AMERICAN CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL PRESENCE IN THE FRENCH ANTILLES AND FRENCH GUIANA IS PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT. AT PRESENT, OUR TOTAL EFFORT IN THE CULTURAL FIELD IS BUT TWO EXCHANGE VISITORS ANNUALLY, AND THIS, OBVIOUSLY, DOES NOT EVEN BEGIN TO HAVE ANY IMPACT LOCALLY. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW THE FRENCH DEPARTMENTS WILL EVOLVE IN THE NEXT DECADE, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THEY WILL MOVE TOWARD AUTONOMY OR EVEN INDEPENDENCE, PARTICULARLY IF A SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT COMES INTO POWER IN PARIS. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, A MODEST
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BEGINNING NOW IN CULTURAL PROGRAMS COULD PAY HANDSOME DIVIDENDS IN THE FUTURE. MOREOVER, THERE IS AT LEAST AS MUCH INTEREST HERE IN AMERICAN CULTURE AS THERE IS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE CARIBBEAN, AND THREE DEPARTMENTS PROVIDE A STEADY FLOW OF STUDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE U.S. THIS YEAR, FOR INSTANCE, MARTINIQUE, GUADELOUPE AND FRENCH GUIANA WILL SEND SOME 10,000 VISITORS TO THE U.S., AND MANY FRENCH CITIZENS HERE HAVE CLOSE BUSINESS

AND FAMILY TIES IN THE U.S.

3. WE HAVE NOT HAD TO PAY SERIOUS ATTENTION TO THE FWI BECAUSE
THE FRENCH PRESENCE HAS REMOVED ANY NEED ON OUR PART TO DO SO.
THIS MAY CONTINUE TO BE THE CASE, BUT WE SHOULD NOT, IN OUR OWN
INTERESTS, IGNORE INDEFINITELY THE 700,000 FRENCHMEN HERE WHO,
IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WILL BE PART OF EVOLVING ATTITUDES
ABOUT THE UNITED STATES IN THE CARIBBEAN.
SHACKLETON

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